

Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SCCT-01 OMB-01 (ISO) W
----- 032391

R 071750Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3752

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

US MISSION GENEVA 617

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4450

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLO XF

SUBJECTC PLO STILL SPEAKING WITH MANY TONGUES

SUMMARY: IN PAST WEEK OR MORE, FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT HAS
BEEN SHOWING MORE THAN CUSTOMARY DISARRAY RE WHAT TO EXPECT
FROM FUTURE COURSE OF ME DEVELOPMENTS. PLO SPOKESMEN
HERE AND IN VARIOUS PARTS OF ARAB WORLD HAVE BEEN MAKING
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STATEMENTS WHICH, WHILE OCCASIONALLY SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON

FEDAYEEN THINKING, HAVE GENERALLY ADDED TO THEIR OWN (AND EVERYONE ELSE'S) CONFUSION. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBIGUOUS AND OFTEN CONFLICTING STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY VARIETY OF FEDAYEEN SPOKESMEN IN RECENT DAYS ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT ISSUES:

(A) RELATIONS WITH JORDAN AND ARAB STATES: 'ARAFAT, SPEAKING IN QATAR ON APR 3, WAS REPORTED BY AFP AS SAYING THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD SEEK IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH JORDAN AND NOT REMAIN "PRISONERS" OF THEIR "SEPTEMBER COMPLEX". PLO NEWS AGENCY (Wafa) WAS QUICK TO COMMENT ON THIS HERE, CLAIMING THAT AFP HAD DISTORTED 'ARAFAT'S REMARKS, WHICH IT ALLEGED HAD DEALT PRIMARILY WITH NEED FOR CLOSER PALESTINIAN-ARAB COOPERATION. IN CONJUNCTION WITH KING HUSSEIN'S APR 3 VISIT TO DAMASCUS, HOWEVER, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION HERE THAT PLO LEADERSHIP--PERHAPS AT SARG'S URGING--MAY BE HEDGING ITS BETS RE FUTURE DEALINGS WITH GOJ. WE ALSO NOTE THAT 'ARAFAT WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SPOKEN IN QATAR OF NEED TO RESOLVE "MISUNDERSTANDING" BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. THIS LEADS MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE THAT 'ARAFAT WILL SOON VISIT SADAT IN CAIRO (AS HE IS APPARENTLY NOW DOING) AND THAT SOME OF THE STEAM HAS GONE OUT OF PLO'S DESIRE TO JOIN WITH SARG IN CREATING JOINT PLO/SYRIAN MILITARY AND POLITICAL COMMAND, AT LEAST TO POINT WHERE PLO WILL SEEK PARTICIPATION BY OTHER ARAB STATES IN SUCH COMMAND.

(B) RELATIONS WITH USSR: SCHEDULING OF 'ARAFAT'S NEXT TRIP TO MOSCOW HAS ALSO BEEN SUBJECT OF CONFLICTING REPORTS. BULK OF THESE HAD ASCRIBED ITS TIMING TO NEXT FEW DAYS, BUT 'ARAFAT--ACCORDING TO AFP--HAS NOW STATED CONTRARY AND CLAIMED HE WOULD VISIT MOSCOW ONLY "AS SOON AS AREA CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT". IN MEANTIME, THERE HAS BEEN STEADY PROCESSION OF FEDAYEEN NOTABLES (SA'QA'S ZOHAYR MUHSEN, FATAH'S NANI AL HASSAN, PDLFP'S HAWATMEH, AND PFLP'S HABASH) TO SEE CHINESE AMB HERE, LADING SOME OBSERVERS TO SPECULATE THAT CERTAIN COOLNESS HAS CROPPED UP IN PLO-SOVIET RELATIONS OVER SOVIET INSISTENCE ON USING SC RES 242 AS BASIS FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN NEXT ROUND OF GENEVA CONFERENCE.

(C) PLO AND GENEVA CONFERENCE: GREATEST FEDAYEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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FUSION AT MOMENT APPEARS TO REVOLVE AROUND PLO'S POSSIBLE ROLE AT GENEVA. IN APR 4 INTERVIEW IN LOCAL LIBYAN-BACKED DAILY, AS SAFIR, PLO OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN ABU MAYZAR HINTED PLO COULD ATTEND CONFERENCE ON BASIS OF ACCEPTANCE BY ALL PARTIES OF LAST YEAR'S UNGA RESOLUTIONS RE STATUS OF PLO. AT SAME TIME, BOTH ABU MAYZAR AND PLO/FATAH POLITICAL CHIEF FARUQ QADDUMI HAVE BEEN STRESSING THAT PLO WOULD NOT RPT NOT ACCEPT GOING TO GENEVA EITHER AS PART OF SOME OTHER ARAB

NATIONAL DEL OR IN SOME "SURROGATE" FASHION SUCH AS ENVISAGED BY SADAT'S NOTION OF USING ARAB LEAGUE DEL TO REPRESENT PALESTINIANS. OTHER FEDAYEEN SPOKESMEN HAVE BEEN HINTING, IN CONTRAST, THAT PRESENCE OF PLO DEL AT GENEVA WOULD RPT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE SINCE THIS WOULD CONSITUTE DE FACTO "RE-VISION" F SC RES 242. FINALLY, WE NOTE THAT 'ARAFAT HIMSELF HAS STEADFASTLY AVOIDED COMMITTING HIMSELF TO ANY OF THESE FORMULAE, COMMENTING ONLY (IN QATAR AND TO SENATOR MCGOVERN HERE) THAT PLO LEADERSHIP WOULD DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT GENEVA ONLY WHEN IT RECEIVES FIRM INVITATION AND LEARNS ON WHAT "TERMS OF REFERNCE" CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD.

(D) PL AND USG: PLO SPOKESMEN REMAIN CRITICAL OF OFFICIAL AMERICAN POLICY AND ATTITUDES, EMPHASIZING THEIR CONTINUING DISTRUST OF USG AND SECRETARY KISSINGER. NEVERTHELESS, LATEST PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY 'ARAFAT AND OTHERS BETRAY SOME HINTS THAT THEY PRIVATELY ARE HOPING--IN CONNECTION WITH CURRENT US POLICY REVIEW AND RECENT STATEMENTS (AS THEY CHOOSE TO INTERPRET THEM) ATTRIBUTED TO SENATOR MCGOVERN--THAT A MORE FORTHCOMING US ATTITUDE TOWARD PLO WILL EMERGE IN NEAR FUTURE. WE HAVE FEELING--BASED ON OUR OWN SOUNDINGS AND "OFF-AGAIN, ON-AGAIN" PRONOUNCEMENTS OF PLO NOTABLES--THAT 'ARAFAT MAY BE DELAYING HIS VISIT TO USSR UNTIL SUCH TIME AS HE FORMS CLEARER IDEA OF WHAT PLO CAN EXPECT TO GAIN FROM OUTCOME OF CURRENT USG POLICY REASSESSMENT.

(E) GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE: ON THIS TOPIC, LATTEST PLO PRONOUNCEMENTS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY DEFINITIVE. IN INTERVIEW WITH AN ALGERIAN WEEKLY, REPORTED LOCALLY MAR 30, KHALID FAHOUM, PRES OF PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL, STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT PALESTINIAN PROVISIONAL GOVT WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE FORMED UNTIL IT OBTAINS OSME TERRITORY TO ADMINISTER.

3. COMMENT: CACAPHONY OF "YES-NO-MAYBE" RISING FROM
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PLO ON ABOVE AND OTHER ISSUES IS SYMPTOMATIC OF HEIGHTENED CONFUSION AND UNCERTAINTY CURRENTLY EXISTING IN FEDAYEEN RANKS IN WAKE OF SUSPENSION OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SECOND ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT (AN AGREEMENT WHICH PLO PROPAGANDA APPARATUS HAD BEEN TREATING AS FORGONE CONCLUSION), KING FEISAL'S ASSASSINATION, ANNOUNCEMENT THAT USG IS REASSESSING ITS ME OPTIONS, AND INCREASED EXPECTATION THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE IS LIKELY TO RECONVENE IN NEXT MONTH OR TWO. ALTHOUGH 'ARAFAT AND PLO LEADERSHIP ARE PROBABLY NO LONGER ALONE AMONG ARABS IN PURSUING "WAIT AND SEE" POLICY, WOULD APPEAR FROM THEIR GYRATIONS THAT THEY ARE HAVING MORE PROBLEMS THAN USUAL IN TRYING TO ASCERTAIN TREND OF FUTURE ME DEVELOPMENTS AND EFFECT WHICH SUCH DEVELOPMENTS WILL HAVE ON THEMSELVES AND ON PALESTINIAN INTERESTS IN GENERAL.
GODLEY

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